DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 297 450 EA 020 192

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TITLE From Gemeinschaft to Gesellschaft: A Case Study of Student Transition from Elementary School to High School.
PUB DATE Apr 88
NOTE 37p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (New Orleans, LA, April 5-9, 1988).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Educational Environment; Elementary Secondary Education; Foreign Countries; Interpersonal Relationship; Participant Observation; Social Characteristics; Social Development; Social Experience; Social Influences; Social Integration; Socialization; Social Networks; *Sociocultural Patterns; Student Behavior; Student Experience; *Student Role; *Student School Relationship; *Student Subcultures
IDENTIFIERS Quebec; Symbolic Interaction Theory; Tonnies (Ferdinand)

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the key differences between elementary school culture and high school culture as experienced by a group of Quebec youngsters making the transition from elementary school to high school. It presents a selective summary of a major research study that focused on the fundamental differences between elementary school student life and high school student life as experienced by a group of students in transition, and how these students adapted to these differences. Two theoretical perspectives provided the basis for the analysis: symbolic interaction theory and Ferdinand Tonnies' distinction between "Gemeinschaft" (Community) and "Gesellschaft" (Association). Participant observation was used to record structural and interactional data related to student life at and around the time when the children at St. Francis Elementary School were reaching the end of the elementary school experience and entering high school. Two sets of questionnaires provided supplementary data. A descriptive account follows, first of the general characteristics of St. Francis Elementary School and of Royalton High, and then of the fundamental differences between elementary school life and high school life as viewed by students in transition. The paper concludes with general reflections on the findings of the study with respect to the issue of school size, the differing socialization environments of elementary and high school, attitudes toward work, student relationships, and staff-student relationships. This is followed by a brief survey of future considerations for researchers and issues for policymakers, educators, and parents. References are included. (TE)

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FROM GEMEINSCHAFT TO GESELLSCHAFT: A CASE STUDY OF STUDENT TRANSITION FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TO HIGH SCHOOL

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Presented at the Annual Meeting of
The American Educational Research Association
New Orleans, Louisiana, April, 1988

EA 020 192

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NATURE OF THE STUDY

In recent years in educational administration research there has been a growing interest in understanding school cultures (e.g., Conway, 1985; Haller and Knapp, 1985). The range of potential payoffs of this approach is broad. At one end of the spectrum, cultural studies offer rich descriptive and interpretive accounts of life in schools (e.g., Wolcott, 1973); at the other end, they help refine past and emerging models of schools as organizational entities (Allison, 1983).

A growing number of researchers are focusing on student life as a means of unraveling some of the mysteries of school culture (e.g., Burnett, 1976; Cusick, 1973; Johnson, 1985; Young, 1985). At the same time, most of the research to date has tended to focus on elementary school life ***or*** secondary school life, but not both simultaneously (e.g., Cusick, 1973; Epstein & Karweit, 1983; Jackson, 1968; Johnson, 1985; Wolcott, 1973; Young, 1985). As a result, the issue of how cultures differ at the elementary and secondary school levels has not yet been adequately addressed.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the key differences between elementary school culture and high school culture as experienced by a group of Quebec youngsters making the transition from elementary school to high school.

The paper presents a selective summary of a major research study that focused on (1) the fundamental differences between elementary school student life and high school student life as experienced by a group of students-in-transition and (2) how these students-in-transition adapted to those differences (Ahola-Sidaway, 1986). Only the first issue--the distinguishing characteristics of the two schooling levels as experienced by the group--is addressed in this paper.

The school system in Quebec, Canada provides an excellent setting for examining the differences between elementary school culture and high school culture as viewed from the perspective of the student-in-transition. Quebec youngsters typically remain in elementary school until completion of grade six, whereupon they move directly into high school. Thus, during elementary-high school transition, these youngsters have the unique advantage of standing at a frontier where their vantage point simultaneously reaches back into the world of elementary school and forward into the world of high school.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

Two theoretical perspectives provided the basis for the present analysis. First, symbolic interaction provided the theoretical rationale for choosing a "qualitative" research approach. Symbolic interactionists maintain that human social behavior in general emerges through interaction with the environment. That is, the environment--with its physical, organizational, and historical artifacts--establishes the basic social structure for emergent human interaction. Through social interaction, individuals make sense of this "objective" world; they develop schemes of interpretation to understand this world (Becker, Geer, & Hughes, 1968; Blumer, 1969; Brittan, 1973; Meltzer, Petras, & Reynolds, 1975). Individuals "in the same boat" arrive at joint interpretations of their world. This interpretive process is ongoing, occurring with each novel or problematic situation the individual or group faces.

In the present study, this interpretive process was carried out by a group of youngsters who, at the onset of the fieldwork, were members of their elementary school culture, and who, by the completion of the fieldwork, were members of their secondary school culture. At the same time, I, too, as researcher, developed schemes of interpretation--both as an observer of and a participant within their world.

The second theoretical perspective that provided the basis for the present analysis is derived from the sociological treatise Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft (translated as Community and Association) by Ferdinand Tonnies (1887, 1931/1955). The decision to use Tonnies' "assistance" was made approximately two years after completion of the fieldwork. I spent the first 18 months of that time creating and trying on conceptual frameworks that would "do justice to the data." In other words, I was seeking a framework that would draw together the various threads of interpretation at each schooling level into some larger, more abstract context that would hold up under close scrutiny of my data. It was at the end of that time that I began to rediscover Tonnies' concepts of "Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft." Months of immersion in his work convinced me that "Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft" (the terms elude attempts at translation) were accurate and useful metaphors to propel my analysis into a more comprehensive format. A summary of that metaphor-data link will be presented later in this paper.

METHODOLOGY

Research, for symbolic interactionists, involves "'getting inside' the reality of the actor [individual] in an effort to understand reality as the actor does" (Meltzer et al., 1975, pp. 54-55). At a practical level, they advocate the use of such techniques as case studies, life histories, letters, non-directive interviews, and most importantly participant observation (Blumer, 1969; Meltzer et al., 1975).

In the spirit proposed by Blumer and his colleagues, I adopted a "qualitative" research stance. My overall goal as a researcher was to record structural and interactional data related to student life at and around the time when a group of youngsters were reaching the end of their elementary school experience and entering the world of high school. The group of youngsters, hereafter referred to as the "St. Francis group" or "St. Francis students," provided the necessary student perspective which would eventually span the two levels of schooling. Everything from physical artifacts, to stated and tacit policies and routines, to emergent meanings expressed by participants, formed the data base. To the extent that it was feasible, I also attempted to ***experience*** the youngsters' day-to-day lives first as elementary school students and later as high school students. This meant spending time with them during their final months of elementary school (grade six) and living amongst them during the opening days, weeks, and months of high school (grade seven). Specific strategies used in the study are outlined below.

Participant Observation

Participant observation was the major field technique used in the study. A definition of this technique is provided by Becker and Geer (1969):

> By participant observation we mean that method in which the observer participates in the daily life of the people under study, either openly in the role of researcher or covertly in some disguised role, observing things that happen, listening to what is said, and questioning people, over some length of time. (p. 322)

After weighing the advantages and limitations of various participant observation stances (becoming a full participant, a limited participant, or a non-participant), I decided to assume the role of an overt, limited participant.

Participant observation was most intense during my May-June daily fieldwork at St. Francis Elementary and my September-October daily fieldwork at Royalton High. In all, daily fieldwork data (including numerous private, loosely structured interviews with various school personnel) yielded over 1000 (8 1/2 X 11) pages of data. Information from written documents, gathered during and immediately following this fieldwork schedule, yielded several more hundred pages of data.

In early November, after daily fieldwork at the high school had ended, I conducted 25 hours of formal, semi-structured, private interviews with 30 St. Francis students. Interviews were taped and lasted approximately 45 minutes each. Interviewees were encouraged to relate anecdotes to support their ideas, and they were given freedom to introduce and expand on emergent themes. These formal interviews yielded 500 pages of transcribed text (prepared by myself).

Supplementary Survey Data

Since neither fieldwork nor interviews could include all members of the St. Francis group, two sets of questionnaires were administered to the group, the first in early June of grade six, the second in late October of grade seven. As is common with many qualitative studies, I personally administered the questionnaires, each time dealing with one half of the group at a sitting. With very few exceptions, a better than 90 percent (and often 95 to 100 percent) return rate was achieved on all items. The survey questionnaires, including student responses, amounted to approximately 1500 pages.

ABOUT THE ST. FRANCIS GROUP

The vast majority of the St. Francis students had a common family background: North American born, Italian descent, Italian frequently spoken with parents, Catholic, and longtime residents of the neighborhood (six years or more). In addition, almost all of their fathers worked, with a majority of them holding semi-skilled or unskilled positions. Over half of their mothers worked outside the home, with all but a few holding semi-skilled positions in nearby factories.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ST. FRANCIS ELEMENTARY

The Quebec system of education is in some ways quite

different from many systems across North America. Schools and school boards are designated either Catholic or Protestant. Schools are further classified along linguistic lines (English-speaking or French-speaking). French-Catholic schools are the most common, followed by English Protestant, English Catholic, and French-Protestant. Youngsters of various ethnic and religious groups are integrated into this French-English, Catholic-Protestant system.

St. Francis elementary school (a pseudonym) is an English-Catholic school situated in a part of the Montreal Urban Community where many families of Italian background live. The school serves the immediate neighborhood and reflects its predominantly Italian, working class makeup. Practically all of its students live along the quiet residential streets surrounding the school, so close that they can easily return home each day for lunch. The neighborhood is separated from other sectors of the city by major physical features--a highway, railroad tracks, major city arteries, and factories.

At the time of the study, St. Francis had a student population of just over 400, comprising kindergarten to grade six. The grade six class was housed in three self-contained classrooms; and total grade six membership was 76 students. St. Francis was also a "feeder" school of Royalton High.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF ROYALTON HIGH

Royalton High (a pseudonym) is also an English-Catholic school. It is located approximately 45 minutes by public transportation from the St. Francis neighborhood. Like St. Francis Elementary, it is situated in a part of the Montreal Urban Community where many families of Italian background live. The student population of Royalton High reflects the area's large Italian, working class population, although it is considered more heterogeneous than St. Francis in terms of socio-economic status. The school is situated along a busy four-lane boulevard. To the non-resident, the boulevard, with its nearby gas stations, car dealers, banks, fast-food joints, and stores, projects a commercial image.

At the time of the study, Royalton High had a student population of approximately 1850, encompassing grade seven through eleven (a typical arrangement in Quebec). Of the original 76 grade six St. Francis students, 68 entered Royalton High as seventh graders (four repeated grade six; four moved out of the catchment area). The entire grade seven class was approximately 400 students. The organizational arrangement of the school mixed teachers and students for different subjects.

FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL LIFE AND HIGH SCHOOL LIFE AS VIEWED BY STUDENTS-IN-TRANSITION

The fundamental differences between elementary school life and high school life, as experienced by the St. Francis students, can be best understood as differences between two organizational cultures. Thus, the following analysis presents the various components of school life at each schooling level within a broad cultural framework.

To encourage further research and reflection, each key finding has been presented as an hypothesis and sub-hypotheses followed by a summary of supportive evidence that has been derived from the data. This style of presentation has been successfully employed by others, including Alvin Gouldner in his classic study Patterns of Industrial Bureaucracy (1954).

H1: Youngsters who make the transition from elementary school to high school move from a ***Gemeinschaft-like*** culture to a ***Gesellschaft-like*** culture.

The concepts "Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft", first used by Ferdinand Tonnies (1887,1931/1955) to describe two ideal types of society, provide useful metaphors to capture the essential differences between the organizational culture of grade six student life at St. Francis Elementary and that of the grade seven newcomers' life at Royalton High.

According to Tonnies, life in a Gemeinschaft, for example, is characterized by permanence and intimacy, little division of labour, and a high degree of social integration that brings about a strong sense of community identity. Communal interests take precedence over individual interests. Individuals are pressed to conform through informal controls. Relationships may be made up of unequals, as in the case of the father-to-child, and a tendency to use force in such relationships is arrested by a sense of love and the responsibility to protect. Relationships between equals are held together by a common purpose.

Life in a Gesellschaft, in contrast, is characterized by transiency, impersonality, anonymity, and a great division of labour and specialization of function. People co-exist independent of each other; and relationships are contractual. Social controls and the enforcement of those controls tend to be formalized (e.g., laws and law enforcement agencies). Individual interests, as opposed to communal interests,

predominate.

As will be shown below, many of the above attributes of these two "ideal types" of society were evident in the two cultures that provided the "context" of elementary-high school transition for the St. Francis group.

A. From a structural point of view, the elementary school culture values integration; whereas the high school culture values specialization first and seeks to reintegrate people, places, and activities through bureaucratic co-ordination.

1. Elementary school life is rooted, whereas high school life is comprised of transient experiences.

St. Francis Elementary:

School life at St. Francis Elementary provided both external and internal integration. The school building existed within a sheltered, homogeneous city neighborhood. Along with the neighborhood playing fields and playground, it formed the area's geographical and social centre, particularly for youngsters in the upper grade of elementary school who were freer to circulate within the area.

The elementary school building itself was neither very large nor complex in its layout, particularly as viewed by grade six students. Regardless of a youngster's grade level vantage point, the real heart and soul of the school could be found inside each classroom; and it was there that a sense of rootedness could be maintained.

Because the classroom was a fixed locality, it could serve as a springboard for the development of firm social roots among those who lived there. Time itself promoted rootedness; each classgroup spent an average of about four hours per day in its room. Classroom space could easily serve a similar purpose. Walls were often decorated with academic work or with handcrafted decorations that might acknowledge an upcoming season, holiday, or an exceptional set of artwork. When later asked to describe their grade six classroom, students often recalled this point, as illustrated here:

> "In elementary school, we stay in that room, so we fix it all up and everything. We put decorations on the walls. Like our artwork, we hung those. Like the whole class would do something for art, and then we'd put them up; and then when you did something

else, you'd take those down and put some more up."

Sometimes the school crest, a crucifix, potted plants, or a local library contributed to a sense of rootedness as did basic items like a clock, a map, a sharpener, a wastebasket, or a scrap-paper pile.

Rootedness could be experienced at a very personal level as well, because everyone owned a piece of that room--a permanent desk. A student's desk housed a wide assortment of personal items and (in two of the three classrooms) was equipped with a hinged desktop that could be lifted without disturbing desktop paraphernalia. The flipside of the desktop served as a personal bulletin board. In addition to pens, pencils, rulers, and the like, stand-up calendars, homesized boxes of facial tissue, scissors, sharpeners, and/or bottles of glue remained on the desktop even when students were not in the room.

Rootedness to one's classroom was also encouraged by devoting time to its upkeep. Libraries were dusted, plants watered, decorations changed, blackboards cleaned, windows and doors opened and closed, and so on. Of the 65 grade six students who indicated whether or not they had a classroom or school job, 49 (21 boys and 28 girls) reported that they did. Furthermore, 89 percent (N=73) agreed with the statement "In St. Francis I enjoy doing little jobs."

Other areas of the school--the school yard, lockers, hallways, washrooms, and the few specialized work settings--were, in fact, ***satellite settings*** for students. Visits to these areas, which were usually carried out by intact classgroups, maintained the spirit of the classroom despite the group's temporary physical separation from it.

Royalton High:

In contrast, when the St. Francis group entered Royalton High, they entered a culture that valued specialized services above integration and rootedness. Because the school's mandate was to offer a "comprehensive" curriculum, it needed a much larger student population than the elementary school and, hence, a much larger catchment area. As a result, the St. Francis students were now required to leave their sheltered community and pass through big-city areas by means of public transportation. In a sense, then, they became strangers in a strange land.

The high school building was also very large and complex in its layout by comparison to the elementary school. Also, because the layout revolved around the concept of separate, specialized settings, no single setting represented a

student's total school experience. Instead, each setting that comprised a newcomer's itinerary provided a distinct and separate snippet of high school life. Classrooms were now considered transitory settings, used from period to period by anonymous groups carrying out anonymous activities. Few rooms that were used by grade seven students actually reflected subject specialization, and few had "decorated" walls or personalized areas around the room. When asked if classrooms looked different at the high school, the newcomers typically noted their spartan character: "There's no posters or anything up, just plain." "Here it's not decorated at all. There's just the desks and chairs; that's all." Oftentimes, the rooms lacked even basic items like a clock or sharpener, although remnants of such items were sometimes visible. "It's half past a wire," one newcomer giggles as he notices three wires sticking out of a classroom wall." The spartan look of these rooms and their frequently looked doors gave the impression that teachers, too, usually traveled from room to room following each period.

Students usually sat in the same location in a given room, but no one could be guaranteed the same desk or chair from one day to the next. Newcomers learned quickly the importance of scooping up all belongings before moving on to their next class.

In contrast to their attitude in grade six, 23 percent fewer St. Francis students enjoyed the idea of "doing little jobs" in the room or school, and few opportunities to do little jobs actually existed. This seemed reasonable. After all, "visitors" in any social context are rarely expected to roll up their sleeves, so to speak.

Engaging in minor vandalism in the classroom now seemed more the rule than the exception. In a math class, a teacher grumbles as he removes the remains of a wall pencil sharpener that he had placed there "for you!" Desktops and nearby walls became handy surfaces for doodling and for information exchange between members of different classgroups (see also p. 22). In one class, a St. Francis student helps pass the time by embellishing a two-inch high "R O C K" graffiti on her desk which has already been accentuated with white correction fluid. In another class, another student picks at the edge of a wall panel while a neighbor adds to the graffiti. During a private interview, another student explains:

> "It's kind of like you say, 'I'm not gonna write on any desk; it's not good.' But you wind up writing on them."

To some extent, the locker setting was less transitory. There, students sometimes added personal touches (e.g.,

mirrors, schedules, posters) to the flipside of locker doors. Also, the locker was a fixed meeting place students, who returned often, yet briefly, there to drop off or pick up personal items and see friends. Specific cafeteria tables also became fixed meeting places for friendship groups during a recess break or lunch period. It seemed, then, that newcomers were, on their own, using the locker and cafeteria table as a means of rekindling a feeling of rootedness that had been an ***integral*** part of their elementary school experience.

2. The elementary school schedule has an organic rhythm to it, whereas the high school schedule has a rational rhythm to it.

The second major structural difference that helped St. Francis sustain its Gemeinschaft-like nature and Royalton High its Gesellschaft-like nature had to do with how each organization handled the relationship between the means and ends of educational activities. St. Francis handled the problem using an organic approach--that is, a meshing of means and ends--whereas Royalton used a more rationally inspired approach--a separation of means from ends.

St. Francis Elementary:

The meshing of work and relaxation within the daily schedule at St. Francis is a prime example of means/ends integration and organic rhythm. Relaxation, whether during organized school yard games; the hour-and-a-half lunch break; special events; the practice on the part of teachers of juxtaposing serious and not-so-serious subjects; or spur-of-the-moment stories, jokes, discussions, games, errands, and stretching exercises, was an integral part of daily work routines. At the same time, relaxation never seemed to overshadow academic work. On the contrary, it seemed to enhance the overall importance of and commitment to work. One student expressed the phenomenon this way:

> "[The teacher] would be talking, and let's say somebody would say a joke or we'd sort of fool around. Until a certain point, and then she'd say, 'Okay, now, down to business' and we'd start working."

Like the human body which often works best on a day-to-day basis with the ingestion of food and a certain amount of sleep and exercise, the blend of work and relaxation provided a conducive work environment. The timetable itself, as well as the wall clock, served to guide rather than to command the day's events. Within certain parameters, the order of class

periods could and did shift according to emerging needs of the teacher and classgroup.

Even the more obvious forms of exercising social control were more naturally integrative at St. Francis than at Royalton High. Direct supervision, it seemed, reached almost everywhere and with almost equal force. Individual teachers were oftentimes both the designer and executor of control, particularly within the classroom. As such, they were more able to modify and create strategies that suited the situation and their own personal strengths. One of the grade six teachers, for example, had great success with this control strategy: When things started getting a little out of hand, she would sometimes call out "Freeze"; and the group would remain in a state of suspended animation until she called out "Melt." Students were free to exploit the "fun" side of the strategy; and the teacher accomplished her goal. This example is but one of the many ways that social control seemed built into daily activities.

Royalton High:

When the St. Francis group entered Royalton High, they entered a culture that valued rationality in its organizational operations. Means and ends were separate issues.

Outside classes, students were controlled by rational strategies that relied on a combination of centralization, standardization, and formalization. Appointment procedures, appointment slips, attendance cards, attendance monitors, absentee lists, routine phoning-home procedures by permanently designated secretaries, a full-time attendance centre, daily lists of unaccounted for students, fixed procedures for handling an early dismissal, late slips, detentions, double-detentions, a fixed detention room, bells, the six-minute interval between classes (which seemed designed to ensure adequate but not excessive travel time between classes for the ***hypothetical*** student), daily bulletins, twice-daily intercom messages, two-way intercom connections between each classroom and the main office, a rotating list of staff supervising duties, locked doors, locked lockers, I.D. cards with special punches to distinguish those who had permission to leave school at lunch and those who didn't, admit slips, library passes, sport passes, and activity passes, were relied on to co-ordinate and control student movement.

The daily schedule also relied on rationality. It was derived from a complex computerized programme that matched subject specialists with a fixed list of course requirements for the ***hypothetical*** student. The reluctance of administrators to alter an individual's schedule highlighted

the school's dependence on this rational model. This point was made clear to ten St. Francis students who attempted to get transferred out of an advanced French class. By December, only one of them had succeeded in getting transferred, despite a November report card that more transfers might be warranted (one student's mark dropped one grade level from the previous year, four dropped two levels, and five dropped three or more levels). This same "emphasis on rationality" was responsible for having most newcomers eat lunch at 11:15 a.m., after completing only two of their six classes.

The building itself, with its numerous specialized settings, reflected the importance placed on rationality. For the point of view of the organization, classrooms became important only in so far as they served as efficient "tools" by which academic programmes could be actualized. Only one well known area of the school--the library--openly aimed to combine an intensive natural and rational focus in its presentation. On the one hand, rationality dictated its operation; but on the other hand, the general ambiance of the library, with its rows of potted plants and impressive sculptures and displays, easily aroused the senses. Note, for example, elements of this dual focus as two St. Francis girls begin discovering Royalton's library:

> They walk...up the open circular staircase to the mezzanine.... they pause and look down on the main floor. Luana points out how high off the floor they are. "Look at those!" she exclaims, pointing to the larger-than-life-sized papier mache manaquins poised in various postures on a platform high above the main floor.... [Later a boy working behind the checkout counter] helps the girls fill out the bookcard. Christina isn't sure what he means by "homeroom" and he smiles and explains. A second boy stationed at a table checks to see that all the books have been stamped before the girls are allowed to leave the library.

Rationality was also a guiding principle for dealing with work responsibilities and relaxation needs. The organization drew sharp distinctions between work and relaxation, and in doing so, the "means" of educational activities were considered apart from their "ends." During worktime, students were expected to submerge pleasure (e.g., relaxation, fun social contact) as part of the necessary price of obtaining the final reward, namely academic success. Taking time to decorate a room or to hold a party, for example, could be easily seen as a relaxing, pleasurable activity with few academic payoffs. Even short-lived "fun" activities seemed to be discouraged. The French teacher who declared to one of her groups,"On joue dehors!" said it best.

Relaxation needs were to be met on one's own time.

B. In elementary school, interpersonal relationships among students and between students and staff reinforce Gemeinschaft tendencies, whereas in high school, interpersonal relationships among students and between students and staff often reinforce Gesellschaft tendencies.

1. Formally prescribed relationships in elementary school are characterized by intimacy, whereas those in high school are often characterized by impersonality.

St. Francis Elementary:

In St. Francis Elementary, each classgroup and its teacher spent more than four hours per day in face-to-face contact in everchanging contexts, a situation that offered ceaseless opportunities to grasp each other as unique individuals ***and*** to create intimate links among individuals. Classmates worked together or side by side on lessons; they publicized each other's performance; they lined up together, played together, moved together, danced together during class parties, were scolded together, received school information and advice together. They were expected to wear the school uniform (navy blue pants, white shirt for boys; navy blue skirt or jumper and white blouse for girls). They even undressed together for gym class (students wore gym clothes under their street clothes on gym days). Individuals achieved special status primarily through their affiliation with the classgroup.

Elementary school teachers played an important part in promoting intimacy within their groups. Two of the three teachers shared two important characteristics with most students: they lived in the same neighborhood and were of the same ethnic background. Teachers also encouraged the publicizing of performance. Having students work at the blackboard, arranging for wall displays, and announcing test marks were some of the more obvious methods used. Teachers also rewarded appropriate behaviour. For example, students were encouraged to clap for a classmate's good test mark. During lessons, students who correctly solved a math problem were sometimes told to stand along the wall. One student explained the process this way:

> "She would watch over us and say, 'Did you do your homework? Did you [get it] wrong?' She'd say, 'How many mistakes did you get?' And 'You didn't do that right.' And she would help you, and then if you got it, she would say, 'Oh, that's good!'"

As noted earlier, fun moments and relaxing activities were also part of the teacher-student relationship. Such occurrences could serve as powerful "binding" and "bonding" experiences, particularly when several of the senses were simultaneously aroused. This student's comments illustrate this phenomenon:

> "Mrs. Mancini, like her job was I think to get acquainted with us, to get like a big family, like more friends. I remember [last Fall], Mrs. Mancini made us do a Turkey Thanksgiving--a Thanksgiving dinner, [at] lunch. One of the parents cooked the turkey. We brought it in class; and we did the mashed potatoes in class, the corn. The whole class. And we invited Mr. Holmes [the principal], the secretary, and a couple of teachers. [Students] brought the food or they washed the things afterwards. We ate in the classroom. It was very fun. The turkey was well cooked. We had triplet servings. We could go to the turkey. We could take more and more. Everybody was full..."

Simply carrying the teacher's coat or handbag, I suspect, even encouraged intimacy. Or the casual touch of the teacher's hand on a student's shoulder. Or the offering of cards and gifts by youngsters and the oohs-and-aahs that those tokens elicited from gracious teachers.

"Intimate" incidents that unfolded within the classgroup were not always pleasant; sometimes they aroused painful emotions. Excerpts from one class's end-of-the-year surprise "wedding party" for their teacher illustrates this multi-faceted norm of intimacy:

> Miss DeVozza's room is decorated with crepe streamers and balloons. Several messages and drawings of wedding bells fill the blackboard; one reads "Have a happy wedding." On a table are two cakes, chips, a wrapped gift... and two cards. When Miss DeVozza opens her gift, everyone except John crowds around her. He sits alone at his desk in the corner of the room (he's the boy who'd made the teacher cry on another occasion and had also spent several weeks sitting downstairs. Normally, his desk faced the back of the room; today it faces the front). Rina goes to a chair at the side of the room and begins to cry. Miss DeVozza consoles her as she explains that she'd forgotten and wasn't supposed to tell that Mrs. Mancini (another grade six teacher) had helped them decorate the room. A peek at one wedding card shows 27 names, presumably

everyone in the class. The other card is signed "From all the class." When the music starts, Miss DeVozza dances briefly with each boy. John runs out of the room when it's his turn to dance with her.

Two of the three grade six classgroups-and-teacher (the two female teachers), in particular, seemed to value and help perpetuate intimacy and involvement. What's more, over 75 percent of the students in those classgroups "strongly agreed" that the teacher cared about them personally.

The elementary school principal did his part in promoting a Gemeinschaft-like way of life by respecting the boundaries that separated one classgroup and its teacher from another. At the same time, he also went out of his way to show his concern for students and to encourage emotional ties with them. One boy expressed his attitude toward the principal in this way:

> "He calls me a good drawer. Like when I make drawings for certain events, and he finds out, he knows that I did it. When we were at the event, he'd say thank you."

This handwritten note given to the principal by a girl on closing day was also revealing:

> "Dear Mr. Holmes
> Thank-you sir for six wonderful years. I'll miss you but hopefully come back and see you. You've been a great principal to me. I came in this school timid and afraid but now I leave with proudness & braveness
>
> A student forever,
> [Student's first & last name]"

Seeing Mr. Holmes at work, I was not surprised to learn that almost all of the grade six students (93 percent) agreed that "the principal cares about me" (68 percent strongly agreed).

Royalton High:

Formally prescribed relationships at Royalton High were characterized by impersonality. To a large extent, grade level groupings and classroom groupings served institutional ends but not social ends. Outside classes, the student population divided itself up according to friendship cliques; and these cliques tended not to mix with each other. Those outside the clique were often regarded as strangers, whether

or not they were in the same grade, were members of the same class, or had previously interacted on a daily basis during grade six.

The impersonal character of high school life also permeated relationships among students in the same classroom. Actually, each classgroup had little in common to define itself as a communal entity except, of course, for the 45 minutes per day designated as formal instruction in a particular subject. Performance was private; discipline strategies were often punitive and lacking in creativity, and they tended to focus on individuals rather than on the group as a whole. Months could pass before classmates knew each other's names. Even ***my*** role remained a mystery to some for several weeks (despite the fact that I would explain it to anyone who asked). On one occasion, for example, one youngster who had been asked to collect student papers from his row quietly told the teacher that the girl in the back (me) hadn't passed him my work. Opportunities to feel "special"--whether by general popularity, sports, good marks, or other achievements--were few, in part because of the lack of a permanent classgroup upon which to "hang" one's status.

Student relationships with teachers were also impersonal. Those who did not meet in classes had nothing to do with each other; and those who did, scarcely more. Outside classes, the administrative and mechanical processes that were used to co-ordinate and control student movement resulted in little if any contact between students and teachers. During those moments, most teachers were undoubtedly either preoccupied with getting to their own destinations or were sequestered inside an office, a lounge, or the staff dining room.

Even teachers who were assigned to supervise specific areas during busy moments had neither time nor opportunity to interact on a personal level with students. At those times, the teacher's job was to keep order among ***hundreds of individual students***, many of whom they did not know.

Inside classes, high school teachers presented themselves as subject specialists who taught, but did not live with, students. This more impersonal style of involvement on the part of teachers may help explain why only approximately eight percent of the St. Francis students "strongly agreed" that their high school teachers cared about them personally.

These same teachers also had little say over and involvement or interest in their students' lives outside of the particular class period. Table 1 lists those non-academic domains that used to be handled, all or in part, by the grade six teacher but ~~was~~ were ***not*** handled by the grade seven teacher.

Table 1

Non-Academic Domains No Longer Handled by the Teacher

Domain	Method Now Used
Articulation of formal school-wide rules	Student handbook, general assembly conducted by administrators
Official daily news	Two centralized news organs (twice-daily intercom announcements; one daily bulletin)
Order and length of classes	Computerized schedule, programmed bells
Student attendance	Office personnel who collect absence notes, call home, issue late slips, generate and distribute a daily absentee list; a permanently-designated attendance centre; attendance monitors; attendance cards; intercom calls; central detention room; roster for detention supervision; student discussions with assistant principal; appointment slips; admit slips
Student movement between classes	Fixed, six-minute intervals synchronized by bells, school I.D. cards, roster of hall supervisors, classroom and locker locations, locked doors
Illness, safety	Nurse, appointment slips
Library facilities	Library staff, school I.D. card, delinquent book returns published in daily bulletin, individual access with lunch pass or after school
Personal, school, career problems	Guidance department, assistant principal, appointments, meetings with counsellor, chaplain
Religious counselling	Chaplain, appointments
Extra-curricular activities	Special animators from teaching and non-teaching ranks

These and other elements already noted resulted in students and their high school teachers being contractually, rather than emotionally and socially, bound to each other.

2. Formally prescribed relationships in elementary school maintain a sense of balance between participants, whereas those in high school often do not.

In the case of prescribed elementary school relationships, a tendency toward "balance" also helped sustain the school's Gemeinschaft-like nature; whereas in the case of prescribed high school relationships, a tendency toward "imbalance" helped sustain the school's Gesellschaft-like nature.

St. Francis Elementary:

In elementary school, "balanced inequality" often permeated relationships among students. Inequality across grade levels was naturally balanced by policies that virtually cut the older students off from younger students. Separate playing areas, grouping rituals, and intact classgroups made it almost impossible to disrupt this imposed balance among youngsters during school hours. Among the sixth graders themselves, inequality was experienced through the relative popularity of students, different performance levels of peers in daily pursuits, and in "teacher's pet" relationships. For example, everyone in Salvatore's class knew that he was better than most when it came to playing dodgeball. And everyone in Marina's class likely considered her a brain. And no one would likely dispute the point that David was much more popular than John.

Yet inequalities were rarely challenged. One reasonable, yet partial, explanation is that the teacher and students valued their membership in the classgroup. It was, too, the only show in town. What's more, since any special status had to be earned in visible ways, classmates, it seemed, could more easily understand and to some extent appreciate an individual's achievement.

At the same time, classmate relationships also maintained an element of "balanced equality." For the most part, everyone followed the same routines and participated in the same activities and events. Feelings of aggression or potential conflicts could be worked out through fast-paced school yard games or through teacher interventions. Also, formal marks, by downplaying poor performance and acknowledging good performance in at least a few domains, likely served to sooth visible and embarrassing differences

among students. For example, at least 38 percent of ***every*** sixth grader's marks that year (including the four who would not be promoted) were A or B, and no more than 33 percent were D or E. What's more, everyone had the status of being in the oldest grade level of the school. Eighty-five percent of the group agreed that "as a sixth grader, I am an important person in this school."

"Balanced inequality" characterized the relationship between the elementary school teacher and his or her students. Everyone--the principal, students, and the teacher--expected teachers to control and co-ordinate the actions of their students both inside and outside the classroom. Both students and teachers stood to gain something by this arrangement. The ***teacher's goals and values*** assumed a legitimacy not easily challenged by students, and, in exchange for this right, the teacher provided students with protection, assistance, and guidance. Note, for example, this student's perception of the protecting role of the teacher:

> "You could tell the teacher, 'This guy pushed me around'...The teacher would know him, and she'd go, 'Okay, I'll take care of it.'"

This balance between unequals was held in place by other factors, too--among them, a respect for relaxation needs of students, a well developed preventative disciplining approach, and regular opportunities to publicly commitment oneself to the underlying values of the relationship. For example, Mrs. Mancini reportedly promised that she would never punish her group by cancelling gym class; and she kept her word. And school tradition called for specific lining up strategies before entering the building: groupings by grade level, lines reflecting classgroup membership and sex, and position in the line determined by height. Miss DeVozza's "memory book"--a set of student essays describing each other in her class--could easily become a vehicle for publicly endorsing an "appropriate" attitude, as illustrated here:

> He is talented...not shy to go in front of the class to give speeches...is helpful...well behaved in class... very intelligent. I'm surprised he's not the best."

<u>Royalton High:</u>

When the St. Francis students entered Royalton High, they often entered into relationships of "imbalanced" equality or inequality. Inequality was blatantly clear to newcomers, who found themselves at the bottom of the student

status hierarchy. Although they accepted the fewer privileges that went with this new position, they often felt vulnerable living side by side with older students. Nine out of ten newcomers indicated that "being pushed around by older students" was one of the things that bothered them most. Stories and occasional direct experiences with intimidation as well as the belief that a staff member was unlikely to step in as arbitrator or protector, likely fueled this feeling of vulnerability.

"Imbalanced equality" could be felt within the same grade level. Concerns about having things stolen or living beside peers who pushed drugs or drank were commonplace. For example, four out of five newcomers indicated that "having things stolen" was one of the things that bothered them most; an identical proportion expressed concern about being around students who push drugs; and two out of three expressed concern about being around students who drink.

Friendship groups helped contain this latent tension by discouraging the intermingling of members of different groups, both inside and outside classrooms. When conflicts did erupt, the underlying imbalance became manifest as individuals faced off or backed off.

High school students and their teachers also maintained "imbalanced inequality" in their relationships with each other. As noted earlier, their relationship was contractual in nature, centering on subject specificity. The myriad elements that made up student life remained, thus, outside the sphere of teacher knowledge, interest, and influence. Understandably, a teacher's potential sources of authority were highly restrictive.

By the same token, students were forced to become more self-reliant; and they also experienced a broader freedom from adult personal control. Such factors helped erode inequalities between teachers and students. In a sense, then, teachers and students met as near-equals and strangers. Note, for example, the themes of "imbalanced inequality", "subject specificity", and "near-equals" in the words of this St. Francis girl:

> "Last year, you thought, 'Oh wow, I'm gonna fix up the teacher's desk.' It's a real honor, you know, cause she's gonna say, she's gonna know that you would like to help out, and that you like to do things. But this year...you don't feel important if you do them. Do your work, and get it over with, and that's all." I asked, "Like if Mrs. Haney asked you to fix up her desk..." She replied, "No, well, fix up her desk? It's not important, fixing up her desk." I continued, "You'd feel silly." "Yeah, I'd feel silly. You know, I'm not the servant over

here? I'm gonna fix up ***your*** [her emphasis] desk?"

"Imbalanced inequality" between teacher and student could become manifest most easily within the classroom, where the goals and values of the teacher confronted the goals and values of individual students and of friendship groups. When dissonance became manifest, students could easily attack the fragile authority structure, as illustrated by these words:

> "[Last year] we'd work, and we'd have fun. We worked better. But here, ***you*** [student's emphasis] have to do the joking; and you get in trouble for that."
>
> "When you're over here [in high school], you act more big; cause at elementary school, when we used to be there, we used to talk normal. But over here...swearing...and stuff like that...to tell the teacher off. Cause at elementary school you have like only one teacher. The teachers [there], they talk to you more; they understand you more. But the teachers over here, they just don't care. They want you for the whole period."

3. Students of elementary school are systematically encouraged to suppress emerging adolescent values, whereas students of high school are systematically encouraged to explore adolescent values.

To be an adolescent in our society is in part to be free to develop one's own values rather than to be forced to blindly adhere to values that are espoused by authoritative adults. In an organizational context, a school's basic orientation may change according to whether or not such freedom is encouraged or suppressed. Unacknowledgement of adolescence, in this study, reinforced a Gemeinschaft orientation, whereas its acknowledgment reinforced a Gesellschaft orientation.

Evidence that supports this hypothesis has already been alluded to in past discussions. For example, the role of the elementary school teacher was so pervasive that students had few opportunities to act independently of them. Conversely, the role of the high school teacher was so narrow that he or she had little say over students' lives.

Another important example has yet to be noted. It concerns the issue of adolescent sexuality as a factor in the creation of a school's cultural orientation.

St. Francis Elementary:

Grade six elementary school students seemed ready and willing to freely explore the world of adolescent sexuality. For example, two thirds of the grade six girls (but only two boys) reported that they had an autograph book. An examination of one girl's book suggests that sexuality played a prominent role in entries, as shown here:

> "Roses are red, Violets are blue
> A table is flat and so are you
> (just kidding)
> Love... [girl's name]

But their school hindered them from exploring this world openly and on their own terms. Child-sized furnishing, mixed gym classes, undressing routines, school-wide moving and lining up rituals that discouraged the emergence of new kinds of boy-girl relationships, uniforms that lacked sex appeal and discouraged (but could not stamp out) experimentation with fashion, not giving time to primp in front of the washroom mirror, discouraging the use of makeup, and dictating the style of dancing to be used during a party were some of the more visible ways that the school reinforced the perception that students were children, not adolescents. The following example serves as an illustration:

> "The thing that didn't make me feel grown up was the uniforms. I really felt like a baby...The uniform made me act a little more babyish."

Granted, such issues as puberty, conception, pregnancy, and childbirth were openly discussed, but only in the context of formal lessons with the teacher solidly in charge.

Royalton High:

High school life, in contrast, made it easy and inviting for students to really explore their adolescent sexuality. The library, with its pop paperback offerings and bookclub publicity pamphlets, were conveniently placed to catch the eye of anyone who used the service. A free teen magazine that was distributed by the guidance department appealed to adolescent sexuality concerns both in its articles and advertising. Its ads featured older teens who sometimes promoted lipstick, eye shadow, mascara, perfume, nail polish, skin lotions, sanitary napkins, fashionable clothing, and shampoos. Some articles spoke about shaving for men and women, acne, and general makeup advice. Its advice column printed letters and offered advice on love, love-making, sexual disease, dating, and homosexuality.

Desktops, walls, and books became handy vehicles for anonymously expressing or reading about adolescent sexuality during classtime. One recurrent theme was the wish to correspond with someone of the opposite sex. One (rather short) newcomer said he read these words on one of his desks: "If a nice girl sits here, phone number, address, height." Another newcomer told of discovering a crack in the wall beside his desk that had been transformed into a mini-mailbox. "Take this paper out," a sign beckoned. They usually asked "What your name is, boy or girl and all that," he explained. Sexual acts and sexual organs were also often depicted on desktops.

Classtime could also be spent in covert joint activities: piecing together a juicy note left behind by someone else, exchanging jewelry, pointing out suggestive graffiti, and so on. Outside classes, newcomers could look to older students for ideas in experimenting with current fashion fads and norms, and they could set their own pace and limits in that regard. Also, a sense of freedom allowed for washroom or locker primping sessions, real or hoped for romantic proclamations of love or strolls to a locker, flirtatious encounters in the cafeteria and hallways, and so on. Needless to say, high school staff members were excluded from such experiences. This exclusion fostered Gesellschaft tendencies by keeping staff and students socially and emotionally apart from one another.

H2 The cultures of the elementary school and high school retain their respective essential distinctiveness despite internal factors that appear to mitigate against this distinctiveness.

A. Seemingly ***similar*** types of structures and relationships that form the basis of ***both*** cultures paradoxically ***enhance*** each culture's distinctiveness.

Example One: The Activity Programmes

The activity programmes at the two schools provide a good example of how seeming similarity can serve different ends.

St. Francis Elementary:

At St. Francis Elementary the activity programme helped build Gemeinschaft spirit. Classgroups and their teacher participated, and sometimes even planned together. The activities themselves were usually integrated into the class schedule, and everyone was usually expected to participate.

What's more, some activities titillated the senses. Collectively experiencing the excitement caused by a diving police helicopter during the annual policemen's visit, or collectively exploring the tastes and textures of foods during a nutrition day activity helped bind the classgroup-and-teacher by means of intense sensual stimulation.

Royalton High:

At first glance, one might have suspected that special events and activities in high school fostered a similar communal spirit. But this was not the case, at least from the point of view of newcomers. The activity programme of high school was a separate entity--much like other aspects of the culture--that stressed diversity and specialization rather than integration. Offerings were numerous, and activities themselves usually took place outside regular school hours. Participants were not grouped according to any pre-existing communal network (i.e., a set of stable classgroups); instead, participants were drawn from an aggregate of individuals--from a ***specific age group*** (in the case of some sports activities), from one or several grade levels, or from among the entire school population--on the basis of their ***personal*** interest in a ***specific*** activity. Being of Italian descent and attending the same school were often the only other factors common to all activity group members (at an informal level, however, friends would often participate together in a particular activity).

In addition, individuals were "free agents" in the sense that they could and did make independent decisions to join, not join, remain with, or quit an activity group. Also, some activities were of a short duration, so the potential for creating a sense of communal spirit within the group (by using a common territory, working and playing together, developing common goals and values) could not be easily actualized.

Example Two: Best Friendships

Best friendships among students provides another example of how similarity across the two cultures could foster different ends. In both elementary and high school, best friendships were an important part of school life. What's more, in both schools, friendships tended to involve individuals of the same grade and sex; and the surrounding culture of each school served as a catalyst for friendship creation and development. Yet, friendships at each level helped perpetuate each school's distinctiveness.

St. Francis Elementary:

In elementary school, when friends were members of the same classgroup, they were able to jointly experience all of the pleasure-and-pain and boredom-and-excitement of daily school life, both inside and outside the classroom. In that sense, those friendships complemented basic classgroup relationships by enhancing an individual's social and emotional commitment to classgroup life. The organizational theorist might view this combination of associations as the meshing of the school's informal organization (personal friendships) with its formal organization (classmate and classmate-teacher relationships).

Of course, personal friendships--because they were not organizationally engineered--could theoretically undermine, or at least overshadow, the sense of community that held together each classgroup-and-teacher. But they did not do so. For one thing, almost half of the best friendships (43 percent) that were cited by sixth graders were rendered impotent because they crossed classgroup boundaries. For another, because the entire elementary school experience revolved around the classgroup and its teacher, an attack on that social unit by a group of friends would attack the very core of everyone's school experience. Both the teacher and students seemed to intuitively know this, and both applied pressure in their own way to prevent such attacks. Teachers used their traditional and formal authority over potential or real deviants, and classmates applied peer pressure. In these ways, many personal friendships could thrive within a carefully monitored environment. The end result was a stronger communal unit.

Royalton High:

In contrast, high school friendships fostered Gesellschaft sentiments beyond their self-imposed borders. Friendships thrived with little or no assistance from formal classgroupings. Old friends tended not to have the same classes. Even when they did, the 45-minute time limit, with its emphasis on "work" rather than on "communal living," forced individuals and friends to use covert means to ease social needs. Such circumstances reinforced Gesellschaft sentiments in two ways. First, the formal organization (the official classgroup and its teacher) and the informal organization (various partial friendship groups) often sought incompatible goals. Second, intimate relationships ***within*** each of these organizations (that is, ***between*** friendship groups and ***between*** students and their teacher) were not encouraged. For example, students often didn't know each other's names; and teachers didn't make any attempts to change that fact.

But it was outside classes where high school friendships really thrived. Individuals were not socially or emotionally

bound to any formal grouping. This fact, together with the numerous bureaucratic controls and an almost complete absence of adult presence, fostered insular friendship groupings. These groups became so adept at offering their members social and emotional ties--a sense of Gemeinschaft, so to speak--that there was little incentive to associate with non-friends. This general tendency toward insularity led to a student population that was made up of myriad autonomous friendship groups whose members at best ignored and tolerated, and at worst feared or instilled apprehension in, anyone not associated with their particular circle of social contacts.

B. "Deviant cases" within each culture are not widespread enough to significantly alter each school's basic orientation.

Rare is the researcher who can honestly maintain that no "deviant cases" were observed that refute his or her concluding interpretive framework; and fortunately so. The issue of "deviant cases" is an intriguing one, mainly because it points the way toward future research and eventually toward more refined theories of human social existence.

This study was no exception. There were indeed important "deviant cases" that seemed to defy the Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft framework that has been offered here as part of the study's conclusions; and these should be duly noted. Before doing so, however, I also wish to point out that, in my opinion, the deviant cases do not appear to seriously undermine the proposed Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft framework; in fact, they may well help demonstrate the resiliency of each culture's orientation. I leave to others the problem of incorporating these cases into a more sophisticated framework than has been attempted in this study.

St. Francis Elementary:

The "gymnastics group" of St. Francis Elementary provides one example of deviance in that it relied on voluntary participation and its practices did not take place within the regular school schedule. Yet its Gesellschaft aspects seem to have been partly offset by the fact that approximately 40 percent of the grade six girls participated. What's more, the group's year-end exhibition was an event for all classmates, thereby doing its part in the promotion of communal experiences.

The daily visit by the French teacher provides another deviant case. The visit was clearly viewed by students as a break from how things normally worked at elementary school The teacher's 45-minute lesson often turned into a struggle

to maintain, and at times recoup, her authority over students. In many respects, however, the 45-minute encounter seemed to inject vitality into the well-established "community of students' by encouraging individuals to band together and treat her as an "outsider." A student explains the French teacher-classgroup relationship this way:

> "In French, everybody would make trouble. Even me. The French teacher wasn't really our teacher."

It may be, too, that "making trouble" helped cleanse pent-up frustrations of students, so their "real" teacher could re-enter the group and easily assume his or her rightful role.

Perhaps the most pervasive deviant case that was observed in the elementary school concerns the kind of relationship that the male grade six teacher, Mr. Mahoney, developed with many of his students. In addition to his sex, some of the more striking differences that set Mr. Mahoney apart from his two women colleagues included the following: He was not Italian. He didn't live in the neighborhood. He often failed to enforce the dress code. He relied on fewer creative strategies when it came to disciplining his students. He did not encourage room decorating. He emphasized academic goals in ways similar to his high school counterparts. He showed little interest in welcoming back former students (over half of the St. Francis group made a return visit during the Fall). A very large majority of his students (70 percent) believed that he didn't care about them personally. And yet, it seemed clear to everyone that Mr. Mahoney was an exception to prevailing norms. Surprisingly, Mr. Mahoney and his classgroup remained a team, although, perhaps, a disenchanted one in many respects. Other "Gemeinschaft" features of school life may have helped neutralize any systematic attack on this "abnormal" situation.

Royalton High:

High school life also had its observable deviant cases--that is, evidence that refuted the notion of a Gesellschaft orientation. On registration day, for example, the principal of the school pronounced that there would be no writing on desks, a position consistent with communal values espoused and practiced in elementary school. Subsequent days proved otherwise, however. Minor vandalism, including writing on desktops, proliferated at a rapid rate, suggesting, in part that such communal values did not actually exist.

During the first day of classes, another type of deviant case could be observed. Teachers often displayed a personal interest in their students by offering advice on how to

survive in the new school, asking for nicknames, mentioning the names of relatives who preceded the newcomer, or joking. Such incidents could easily have constituted some first steps toward a Gemeinschaft relationship between students and their teachers. But that was not to be the outcome. Teachers quickly "turned off" any personalized interactions with students and set out, instead, to establish an atmosphere of serious, uninterrupted work. The "joking" teacher did continue to occasionally inject a humorous and social tone inside his classes, but he clearly represented the exception to existing norms.

Perhaps the most significant deviant cases of high school life were directly linked to how several key non-teaching staff members fulfilled their roles vis-a-vis newcomers. The principal, for example, always made a point of coming on the intercom to make "serious" announcements. When he spoke compassionately about the death of the school's head janitor, and when he spoke about the many meanings of Thanksgiving, he conveyed the image of a caring school community. Similarly, the assistant principal in charge of grades seven-eight, the guidance counselors, the nurse, and the chaplain injected a caring dimension into their relationships with newcomers. Reaching out took a variety of forms: from a one-on-one conversation about diet plans to a gentle touch on a shoulder, from an expression of empathy when a newcomer expressed frustration with the new school to an invitation to pause in an office in order to catch a breath.

Nevertheless, such incidents were highly infrequent, both in terms of who they reached out to and how often they did so. And one could hardly expect otherwise, given the other unrelenting demands on a staff member's time and a responsibility to serve the needs of a population numbering 2000.

What's more, ***any*** kind of newcomer contact with these adults was minimal in comparison with the amount of contact newcomers had with friends and even with individual teachers. Thus, these non-teaching adults did little, it seemed, to change the overall Gesellschaft fabric of high school life from the viewpoint of the newcomer.

REFLECTIONS ON THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

VIS-A-VIS PAST RESEARCH

Along the way to establishing the concluding conceptual framework Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft, certain findings and speculations presented by past researchers took on additional

significance. I wish now to highlight some of the more outstanding issues in that regard.

On the issue of size... The issue of school size has intrigued many researchers. It has been argued, for example, by Cotterell (1979) that small schools promote a greater sense of being valued and needed. Findings of other studies sometimes show little or no relationship between a school's size and student attitudes or behaviours (e.g., Ahola, 1978; Isherwood & Hammah, 1981; Rutter, Maughan, Mortimore, & Ouston, 1979). The findings of this study suggest that such issues as the ***culture*** of a school and the kind of relationship that one maintains with one's teacher(s), principal, and fellow students provide more salient clues about feeling valued and needed than does size per se.

About the differing socialization environments of elementary school and secondary school... When Smedley and Willower (1981) found that the elementary school students of their study perceived their school to be more "robust" (that is, more interesting, meaningful, challenging, and action-packed) than did the secondary school students, the researchers wondered whether the differences arose from purely subjective perceptions of students or from observable differences in school environments. If the present study is any indication, elementary and secondary school students do live in two very different worlds. Moreover, such concepts as "robustness" may be highly restrictive and even misleading because they too easily fail to capture the essence and subtleties of each experience.

About attitudes toward work... Past research on student attitudes toward work have not yielded consistent findings. On the one hand, for example, many of Cotterell's (1979) student respondents expected and later found high school work to be interesting and challenging. Goodlad (1984), in contrast, found that junior and senior high school teachers most frequently cited "lack of student interest" as their school's biggest problem. The findings of the present study helps place the issue into a broader context. For example, one's attitude toward work may be influenced by many factors--for example, the kind of relationship one evolves with the teacher, classmates, and friends; the kind of marks one receives; the pressure on the individual to commit him/herself to specific types of goals; the other needs, interests, and concerns within a school culture that compete for a student's time and attention.

About student relationships ... Overall, relatively few of Cotterell's (1979) student respondents either expected or later felt intimidation by older students. Smith (1981) and Blyth, Simmons, and Bush (1978) found that newcomers often encountered intimidation. Findings of the present study not only support the second view, but they also suggest that the

basic makeup of the student sub-culture in high school fosters anonymity and apprehension among students who are not friends. The findings also suggest that elementary school friendships enhance the overall communal spirit that pervades classroom life.

From a broader perspective, this study also supports the notion that student life is, first and foremost, a profound social experience. Others (e.g., Gordon, 1957; Coleman, 1961; Goodlad, 1984) have made this same point, but the present study enhances the argument by its elementary-secondary school comparisons, by its focus on students-in-transition, and by its Quebec/Canadian context.

About staff-student relationships... Previous studies have argued that staff-student relationships change as youngsters progress through the school system. Dreeben (1968), for example, argued that youngsters learn about the norms of independence and universalism as personal contact between students and teachers diminishes. The present study supports that argument yet provides a cultural and transitional context in which to explore these issues. Goodlad (1984) "suspects" that a "subtle shift" in teacher priorities occurs as youngsters approach the end of their elementary schooling. Grounded data from the present study offers strong evidence that a shift does indeed occur--at the time of transition--but that it is far from subtle. What's more, cultural pressures at work inside each school are the driving force behind these shifts. Smedley and Willower (1981) found a more custodial and less humanistic approach to student control among high school, as opposed to elementary school, staff. The present study generally supports their findings, but the notion of control is seen simultaneously from the point of view of two school cultures.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS FOR RESEARCHERS

The present study raises a number of important issues that researchers may wish to pursue. The more salient ones may be summarized by the following questions:

* Do the concepts "Gemeinschaft" and "Gesellschaft" offer a useful framework for studying school life? If so, how might these concepts be refined?

* Do youngsters of other schools experience a similar shift in cultural context when they make the transition from elementary school to high school?

* To what extent do the experiences and perceptions of all school participants (principals, newly arrived teachers, long-standing teachers, secretaries, janitors, new students, special students, mid-grade students, older students, and so on) coincide to provide a distinctive cultural portrait?

* Do the cultural patterns of elementary school and/or high school vary from one grade level to another? from one classgroup to another? from one time of the year to another? from one social context to another (e.g., urban-suburban-rural, large school-small school, Canadian-United States)?

* How are cultural patterns that make up a particular school or classgroup maintained? How are they learned by youngsters?

ISSUES FOR POLICYMAKERS, EDUCATORS AND PARENTS

The findings of the present study also serve a practical function by providing a springboard for future debate among educational decision-makers, practitioners, and clients. The following questions are worthy of mention:

* What kinds of cultural patterns does "your school" want to reinforce? Do these patterns "shine through" when your organization's structure and interpersonal relationships are scrutinized?

* Do the cultural patterns of your elementary school help prepare youngsters for high school life? Should they?

* From the point of view of quality of life at school, what is lost and what is gained when youngsters move from elementary school to high school? Are these losses and gains acceptable tradeoffs?

* How might the schooling process be reconceived in order to incorporate the strengths of each schooling level within both levels? For example, is it possible at the elementary school level to encourage youngsters to define their own values and to challenge authority figures within the school without losing the secure, caring environment that elementary school seems able to provide? By the same token, is it possible at the high school level to encourage youngsters to establish strong ties with classmates and teachers without forfeiting opportunities to define their own values and to challenge the authority of their teachers?

* So much of school life revolves around relationships. Should a greater emphasis be placed on developing youngsters' and staff members' communication and interpersonal skills?

There is no question that schools are powerful socializing agencies for youngsters. We have spent decades studying these fascinating organizations, and we are likely to continue to do so for a long time to come. This paper has described some key elements of school culture from the perspective of one group of students undergoing the transition-of-necessity from elementary school to high school. It is hoped that this work has contributed in some small way to unravelling some of the mysteries of these organizations.

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